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NO PLAYS EXCHANGED

AMATEUR SERIES

PRICE 15 CENTS

The Way of a Woman

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS CHICAGO

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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

THE WAY OF A WOMAN

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

IRVING DALE

AUTHOR OF

"Friend Husband."

CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

PS635
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THE WAY OF A WOMAN

CHARACTERS.

FERDINAND KILTERN ....*A Husband*
MR. CHOATE .....*A Playwright*
MRS. KILTERN .....*A Wife*

PLACE—*Anywhere.*

TIME—*Afternoon.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

COSTUMES.

Modern.

PROPERTIES.

A well furnished living room with a tea table and service. Manuscript copy of a play and sheet of paper with list of patronesses for Choate. Lorgnettes for Mrs. Kiltern.

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Oct 15 1919
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THE WAY OF A WOMAN

At Mrs. Kiltern's *in the afternoon.* Mrs. Kiltern *and* Mr. Choate *are sitting near a tea table.* Mr. Choate *is reading a play—his play—aloud, as* Mrs. Kiltern *listens in an attitude of exaggerated interest.*

Mr. Choate (*reading*). "Her arms steal about his neck, her head falls on his shoulder, and the curtain falls."

Mrs. Kiltern (*clapping her hands daintily*). Splendid! Splendid! That's an awfully good little play. How clever you are! Let me give you some more tea.

Mr. C. (*passing his cup*). Do you really like it, Mrs. Kiltern?

Mrs. K. Indeed I do, I think it's great! I'd love to play Dora.

Mr. C. I was hoping perhaps you would. Couldn't you?

Mrs. K. I'd love to. (*Hesitating.*) But I'm afraid my husband wouldn't like it.

Mr. C. It's for only one performance, you know, and for charity.

Mrs. K. Yes, I know. But Mr. Kiltern is so against anything theatrical.

Mr. C. Why, I always understood you used to be on—I beg your pardon.

Mrs. K. Oh, I don't mind. Everyone knows I used to be on the stage. I was in the business when Mr. Kiltern married me. That's one reason he's so dead against it—he's afraid I'll want to go back. So many actresses marry outside the profession—then tire of domesticity and return to the stage. It's apt to break up the home, you know.

Mr. C. Haven't you ever had a hankering to go back?

Mrs. K. Never one little hanker. I'm too absurdly happy as I am. Besides, I never had any illusions about the theatre. (*Sadly.*) I know the seamy side of it too well. The

jealousy! The rivalry! The drudgery of it all! I had to work, and work hard for what little success I did have.

MR. C. What line of parts did you play, Mrs. Kiltern?

MRS. K. I used to lead the marches.

MR. C. (*rising*). Um—yes—oh, yes!

MRS. K. Still I would like to take part in your little play—to do Dora. I understand her. She appeals to me.

MR. C. Don't you think you could inveigle your husband into letting you?

MRS. K. It's for charity (*hesitating*)—and, of course, that takes off the curse. (*Rising and speaking firmly.*) I'll do it! I'll do it!

MR. C. That's fine! Now I know my play will be a success.

MRS. K. Ferdinand may be a bit difficult at first, but he'll come around all right.

MR. C. Oh, I'm sure you can manage him.

MRS. K. I can—usually. Do stay and meet him. He gets along about this time. (*Closing her eyes.*) Oh, I can see myself in the part. She's a dear. I'll dress her in pink.

MR. C. Or blue. Don't you think blue is more in keeping?

MRS. K. No! No! Blue is too cold. Pink is what you want. A deep pink shading into mauve. Besides, that lights up so well. And then when she throws on a wrap—when she's leaving him, you know—I'll use a real mauve. It will be stunning! It really is an awfully good part, isn't it?

MR. KILTERN *appears in the doorway.*

MRS. K. Oh, here you are! I'm so glad you've come, Ferdy. I want you to meet Mr. Choate. Mr. Choate, this is my husband. (*They shake hands.*)

MR. K. How'dy do.

MR. C. Charmed, I'm sure.

MRS. K. Mr. Choate has just been reading me the dearest little play in the world—one he wrote himself.

MR. K. (*getting suspicious*). Yes?

MRS. K. And—now don't freeze up, Ferdy—he wants me to be in it.

MR. C. It's for charity.

MR. K. Um—for charity?

MR. C. Yes. The Home for Inefficient Females.

MR. K. It will fill a long-felt want. I'll give them five dollars.

MRS. K. And let me do the part! Ferdy, you're an angel. (*Runs to him.*)

MR. K. And *not* do the part.

MRS. K. (*turns away pouting*). You're a brute!

MR. C. Oh, I say, that's too bad!

MR. K. It's not that I have any objections to you or your play—

MR. C. You can't have. You don't know anything about either one of us. (MRS. K. *shakes her head at him.*)

MR. K. (*patiently*). It is not that I have any objection to you or your play, but I won't have my wife mixing up with a bunch of actors.

MRS. K. But, Ferdy, they're not actors—they're amateurs.

MR. C. Some of the best people in town are patronesses, too. See, here is the list.

MR. K. (*looks it over and is impressed*). How many are in the play?

MR. C. There are three characters, a husband, his wife, and a maid. Don't you want to read it?

MR. K. (*ignoring the play*). Who's going to play the husband?

MR. C. (*modestly*). Well—er—I thought I would. It's a sort of an English silly-ass part. I'm something the type, you know.

MRS. K. (*seriously*). You'll do it beautifully.

MR. K. I'm sure he will.

MR. C. Won't you read it, Mr. Kiltern, and see what a harmless little thing it is?

MR. K. Never read plays. What is it about?

MR. C. (*airily*). Oh, everything—nothing! Trifles light

as air. The husband and wife talk themselves into a tiff and out again. She wants her own way—

MR. K. How original!

MRS. K. And gets it!

MR. K. Ah!

MR. C. She plays horse with him—completely pulls the wool over his eyes! When the play ends, the husband thinks he is having his own way. She knows she is having hers. The joke is on him, you see.

MR. K. Yes, I see. You said he was a silly ass.

MR. C. The plot, I know, is conventional—there are so few plots, alas! I am hoping the dialogue will carry the play along.

MRS. K. It's good, Ferdy, really. Full of clever things. Awfully like Shaw—only brighter.

MR. C. (*deprecatingly*). My dear Mrs. Kiltern! Sacrilege!

MR. K. Who is Shaw?

MRS. K. Ferdinand!

MR. C. (*to the rescue*). Won't you let us read it over to you—get the positions—sketch it out, as it were?

MRS. K. Oh, do, Ferdy! You can sit there and be audience. You'll enjoy it, I know you will. Now do sit down and listen to it, that's a dear.

MR. K. (*sits reluctantly*). Well, if it is understood that it is very much against my will. I don't care for this sort of thing, you know.

MRS. K. Yes, yes, we know. Have you an extra copy, Mr. Choate?

MR. C. No, but you may have this one. I know the thing backwards. It opens with a scene between me and the maid. Won't you do the maid, Mr. Kiltern? (*Holds the play out to* MR. K.)

MR. K. Thanks, I'm no actress.

MR. C. I meant just to help us out for the time being. (*Hands manuscript to* MRS. K.)

MRS. K. Oh, let's skip all that and get down to the big scene between you and me. What page is it on?

MR. C. Oh, half way over—page eleven, I think. You see, Mr. Kiltern, Dora and her husband—Mrs. Kiltern is Dora—are having a little dispute over money matters, and she threatens to leave him. It's all kept very light, you know—the very lightest comedy. (*To* MRS. K.) Have you found the place? Oh, yes. Now, you pick up the cue, Mrs. Kiltern. (MR. KILTERN *looks around for the cue—doesn't see anything and sits back.*) You're over there on the left, there by the chair will be about right. (*Acting.*) "And I say, no!"

MRS. K. (*reading with the aid of her glasses*). "Oh, don't be such a tightwad, Roger. You don't expect me to go through the entire season with only two hats?"

MR. C. "Why not? My mother can."

MRS. K. "My dear, I can stand for your mother's biscuits, but not her hats."

MR. C. "Just what do you mean by that?"

MRS. K. Now here I am supposed to laugh cynically. I never could laugh at rehearsals—I need the inspiration of an audience.

MR. C. Try.

MRS. K. Oh, I can't. (*Tries.*) Ha! ha! There, you see, it's no use.

MR. C. Oh, well, go on with the lines.

MRS. K. I don't say anything, I just laugh cynically. You have the next speech.

MR. C. Oh, yes. Er—er—"That is cruel, Dora, cruel." (*Shows deep grief.*)

MRS. K. (*goes to him*). "Forgive me, dear."

MR. C. "You hurt me when you talk like that." (*Puts his arm about* MRS. K.)

MR. K. (*jumping up*). Hey, cut that out!

MRS. K. Don't be silly, Ferdy. The arms are all a part of the business.

MR. K. Well, cut out the arms. (*He sits down again.*)

MR. C. Perhaps we had better stick to the lines.

MRS. K. (*reading*). "Then you will give me the money?"

MR. C. "I am sorry, Dora, I cannot."

MRS. K. "Oh, Roger, remember how happy we were when we were first married—you denied me nothing." (*She puts one arm around his neck in a perfunctory way, keeping her eyes glued to the manuscript.*)

MR. K. (*jumping up*). Now *you're* doing it!

MRS. K. For heaven's sake, Ferdinand, it's all in the part! See, "She puts her arm about his neck."

MR. K. Well, I don't like it, that's all; I don't like it! There's too much hugging in this show—too damned much!

MRS. K. Ferdinand!

MR. C. Mr. Kiltern!

MRS. K. The idea of using such language before Mr. Choate! What do you mean? Have you taken leave of your senses?

MR. K. (*half apologetically*). Well, I can't help it. It makes me sick to see you two acting there like a couple of goops.

MR. C. (*rising manfully to the occasion*). Pray, don't mention it, Mr. Kiltern; don't mention it.

(*They continue somewhat subdued by the little jar.* MR. K. *sits down again.*)

MRS. K. (*reading*). "Oh, Roger, remember how happy we were when we were first married. You denied me nothing." (MR. K. *looks to see what she is going to do in the way of business. She crooks her arm in the air as if it were about "Roger's" neck.*)

MR. C. "I deny you nothing now—within reason, that is. It wearies me to have you continually referring to that period of our life." (*He mops his brow with an elegant gesture.*)

MRS. K. "Oh, Roger, how can you be so cruel—so inhuman! You are cold, cold! Will nothing warm you up? It was not always—"

MR. C. "There you go again! Always referring to the 'used to be.' If you are not satisfied with our life together you know what you can do!" (*He stalks away.*)

MRS. K. "How dare you speak to me like that—how dare you! Me, your lawfully wedded wife!" (*Back to her nor-*

mal voice.) Is "me" grammatical? It sounds funny, doesn't it?

MR. C. Oh, yes, it's all right. What made you stop? It was going splendidly.

MRS. K. Just give me the cue again.

MR. C. "You know what you can do." (*He stalks away.*)

MRS. K. (*working it up*). "How dare you speak to me like that—how dare you! Me, your lawfully wedded wife! I do know what I can do—I'll leave you! Go home to my people! They will look after me—protect me. Oh, I don't care if I never see you again—I don't care what becomes of you—you can come as you like—go as you like—I don't care—a—damn!"

MR. K. (*jumps up*). Here! Here! What's that?

MRS. K. It's in the part, Ferdinand; it's in the part.

MR. K. You won't let me say "damn" and I'll be—

MRS. K. Ferdinand, it makes a difference how it is said and who says it.

MR. K. (*snorting*). I should say it did!

MRS. K. When you say it you mean it. But in this case the character is saying it, not me. Besides, it doesn't sound so bad coming from a lady.

MR. K. It sounds worse. She is no lady or she wouldn't say it. A "damn" is a "damn," no matter who springs it. I absolutely refuse to allow you to play such a part.

MR. C. Oh, come, Mr. Kiltern, that's too bad! Why, the very best people use that expression every day.

MR. K. Then why can't I say it?

MRS. K. Because you're so nasty about it. You look as hateful and wicked as possible when you swear. You may say what you like when we are here alone, but not when we have company.

MR. C. Oh, don't mind me. Treat me as one of the family, I beg of you. You will allow her to do the part, won't you, Mr. Kiltern? It's such an innocent little play.

MR. K. No, sir—ee—sir! When I say a thing, I mean it!

MRS. K. How childish, Ferdinand, how perfectly child-

ish! What will Mr. Choate think of us! I never was so mortified in my life. (*To* Mr. C.) I am so sorry I let you in for this.

Mr. C. It doesn't matter a bit, Mrs. Kiltern. I only wish it were possible for you to help us out. But if your husband says "No" (*shrugging his shoulders*), why, that settles it. Perhaps some other time—? (*Holds out his hand.*)

Mrs. K. (*giving him hers*). Perhaps so.

Mr. C. Good afternoon, Mr. Kiltern.

Mr. K. Afternoon.

Mr. Choate *goes out.*

Mrs. K. Oh, dear! dear! dear! dear! How could you—how could you! He'll spread the story all over town. And it will lose nothing in the telling, I assure you.

Mr. K. (*his voice belies his brave words*). Don't care if he does. They'll know I'm master in my own house.

Mr. Choate *pops back.*

Mr. C. I forgot my manuscript, Mrs. Kiltern. So sorry to trouble you.

Mr. K. Er—er—Mr. Choate, couldn't the play be er—er—changed a little—leave out some of the more objectionable portions?

Mr. C. I'm afraid not, Mr. Kiltern. I have weighed each word—and each word exactly expresses the emotion of the moment.

Mrs. K. Of course I quite agree with you.

Mr. K. I haven't any real objection to the play itself. Only the language seems more forceful than polite—don't you think so?—especially for a lady.

Mr. C. We writers are very jealous for our brain children, Mr. Kiltern, and dislike making changes.

Mrs. K. Of course; how perfectly natural.

Mr. K. I'd almost be willing to have her take part if she could say "darn" instead of—of some of those other things.

Mrs. K. It doesn't matter, Ferdinand. I wouldn't take part now under any consideration.

(MR. CHOATE *starts forward in protest. Unseen by* MR. KILTERN *she motions him to silence.*)

MR. K. I was only trying to please you—to make amends. I thought you wanted to be in the thing.

(MR. CHOATE *looks distressed at "thing."*)

MRS. K. So I did—but I don't now.

MR. K. Come, come, my dear, of course you do. All it needs is a few simple things—a scratch of the pen and the trick is done.

MRS. K. A few simple changes! A scratch of the pen! Mutilation!

MR. C. Impossible! Impossible! No, Mr. Kiltern, my play stands or falls as it is.

MR. K. Very well, then, we'll leave it as it is. Now come, my dear, start your rehearsals again. I won't butt in this time.

MR. C. Oh, that's fine! Let's get to work.

MRS. K. (*sadly*). No, I don't want to be in the play. All the joy has been taken out of it.

MR. K. (*on one side, coaxing*). Oh, do.

MR. C. (*on the other*). Yes, do, Mrs. Kiltern.

MRS. K. (*as before*). Mountains could not move me. It was such a little thing I asked, Ferdinand, and you refused. (*She is approaching tears and can't find her handkerchief.*) (*Both men fish for theirs.*)

MR. K. There, there, dear; don't cry. I'm sorry. Forgive me. (*She dries her tears.*)

MR. K. That's a good little girl. Now you two get to work again. I'll skip out and let you have the place to yourselves.

MRS. K. (*sadly but firmly*). No, I'm not going to.

MR. K. (*controlling his temper with difficulty*). Why not? For heaven's sake, why not?

MRS. K. Because—because you don't want me to be in it. It wouldn't be any fun for me to do what you don't want me to do. (*Tears threaten again.* MR. CHOATE *stands ready with his handkerchief.*)

MR. K. But I do want you in it. I do! I do!

MRS. K. Really?

MR. K. Yes, really.

MRS. K. Very well, then, Ferdinand (*swallowing a sob*), to *please you* I'll play the part.

(MR. CHOATE *is almost overcome by laughter.*)

MR. K. (*with a sudden change of voice*). Now see here —don't you think for a minute that you are playing horse with me—that you are pulling the wool over my eyes, because you're not. Don't you think that I think I am having my own way—because I know I am not. From the very first you intended to be in that play—and by hook or by crook you were going to get my consent. Well, you've got it! But just remember—I'm no silly-ass husband!

MRS. K. (*for a moment she is overwhelmed—then she swells with pride that he dares talk to her in such a fashion*). Ferdy, you old darling, that's the longest speech I ever heard you make. I didn't dream you had so much spunk! Come here and kiss mother!

(*For a minute more he plays the tyrant—then trots over to her sheepishly. They follow* MR. CHOATE'S *words as he speaks.*)

MR. C. "Her arm steals about his neck, her head drops on his shoulder—and the curtain falls."

CURTAIN.

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Doings of a Dude, 20 min.	2	1
For Reform, 20 min.	4	
Fresh Timothy Hay, 20 min.	2	1
Glickman, the Glazier, 25 min.	1	1
Good Mornin' Judge, 35 min.	9	2
Her Hero, 20 min.	1	1
Hey, Rube! 15 min.	1	
Home Run, 15 min.	1	1
Hungry, 15 min.	2	
Little Miss Enemy, 15 min.	1	1
Little Red School House, 20 m.	4	
Love and Lather, 35 min.	3	2
Marriage and After, 10 min.	1	
Memphis Mose, 25 min.	5	1
Mischievous Nigger, 25 min.	4	2
Mr. and Mrs. Fido, 20 min.	1	1
Oh, Doctor! 30 min.	6	2
One Sweetheart for Two, 20 m.		2
Oyster Stew, 10 min.	2	
Pete Yansen's Gurl's Moder, 10m.	1	
Pickles for Two, 15 min.	2	
Si and I, 15 min.		1
Special Sale, 15 min.	2	
Street Faker, 15 min.	3	
Such Ignorance, 15 min.	2	
Sunny Son of Italy, 15 min.	1	
Time Table, 20 min.	1	1
Tramp and the Actress, 20 min.	1	1
Troubled by Ghosts, 10 min.	4	
Troubles of Rozinski, 15 min.	1	
Two Jay Detectives, 15 min.	3	
Umbrella Mender, 15 min.	2	
What Happened to Hannah, 15m.	1	1

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